

Enactments of Power

The Politics of Performance Space

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

Ed. note: In May 1996, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o delivered the Clarendon Lectures in English at Oxford University, Britain. The following is the second of the four lectures, which will be published by the Oxford University Press in Fall 1997 under the title: Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa.

I

The struggle between the arts and the state can best be seen in performance in general and in the battle over performance space in particular. Performance is representation of being—the coming to be and the ceasing to be of processes in nature, human society, and thought. If before the emergence of the state the domain of culture embodied the desirable and the undesirable in the realm of values, this was expressed through performance. The community learned and passed its moral codes and aesthetic judgments through narratives, dances, theatre, rituals, music, games, and sports. With the emergence of the state, the artist and the state become not only rivals in articulating the laws, moral or formal, that regulate life in society, but also rivals in determining the manner and circumstances of their delivery.

This is best expressed in Plato's dialogue: *The Laws.* The Athenian describes how they, as the representatives of the state, must respond should the tragic poets come to their city and ask for permission to perform:

> We will say to them, we also according to our ability are tragic poets, and our tragedy is the best and noblest; for our whole state is an imitation of the best and noblest life; which we affirm to be indeed the very truth of tragedy. You are poets and we are poets, both makers of the same strain, rivals and antagonists in the noblest of dramas, which true law can alone perfect, as our hope is. Do not then suppose that we shall all in a moment allow you to erect your stage in the agora, or introduce the fair voices of your actors, speaking above our own, and permit you to harangue our women and children, and the common people, about our own institutions, in language other than our own, and very often the opposite of our own. (1976:VII, 52)

The Drama Review 41, 3 (T155), Fall 1997.

The war between art and the state is really a struggle between the power of performance in the arts and the performance of power by the state—in short, enactments of power. The conflict in the enactments of power is sharper where the state is externally imposed, in a situation where there is a conqueror and the conquered for instance, as in colonialism.

Jomo Kenyatta dramatizes an example of such a confrontation in *Facing Mount Kenya* ([1938] 1962). The story goes that there was a brief period of kingship in the Agĩkũyũ society. This was replaced by a new more egalitarian system rooted in the family as the basic unit. The replacement was effected through a revolution, *ituĩka*, which literally means a break, a complete break with what has gone before. The new revolutionary councils, all the way to the highest coordinating body of elders, derived their authority from below. The coming to be of this new system was celebrated through an ituĩka ceremony every 25 years or so. This also marked the passing of power from one generation to another. The festival was spread over a period of six months, and it involved the entire land inhabited by the Agĩkũyũ. The British colonial state was established about 1895. Thirty years later the Agĩkũyũ community was involved in a flurry of activities to celebrate the ituĩka ceremony, but this was stopped by the colonial state. The performance of ituĩka was taken as a challenge to colonial state power. The annual British military parade at the opening of the new sessions of the legislative assembly replaced ituĩka-type performances.

The main ingredients of performance are place, content, audience, time, and the goal—the end, so to speak—which could be instruction or pleasure, or a combination of both—in short, some sort of reformative effect on the audience. The state has its areas of performance; so has the artist. While the state performs power, the power of the artist is solely in the performance. Both the state and the artist may have a different conception of time, place, content, goals, either of their own performance or of the other, but they have the audience as their common target. Again the struggle may take the form of the state's intervention in the content of the artist's work—what goes by the name of censorship—but the main arena of struggle is the performance space: its definition, delimitation, and regulation.

II

I can take any empty space and call it a bare stage, says Peter Brook in the opening line of his book *The Empty Space* (1968). A man walks across the empty space while someone else is watching him; this is all that is needed for an act of theatre. I want to pose the question: Is a performance site ever empty, as in the title of Brook's book? There are many ways of looking at performance space. One is as a self-contained field of internal relations: the interplay of actors and props and light and shadows—mise-en-scène—and between the mise-en-scène as a whole and the audience. The outer boundaries of this space are defined by a wall, material or immaterial. The material could be stone or wood or natural hedges. The immaterial is the outline formed by the audience in what is otherwise an open space. The director utilizes the entire playing field, *ithaakĩro*, to maximum effect on both the actors and the audience. He will look for various levels, heights, centers, and directions of force in the acting area. But these levels and centers acquire their real power only in relationship to the audience. The entire space becomes a magnetic field of tensions and conflicts. It is eventually transformed into a sphere of power revolving around its own axis like a planet in outer space. This is the real magic and power of performance. It incorporates the architectural space

of material or immaterial walls into itself and becomes a magic sphere made still by its own motion—but it is potentially explosive, or rather, it is poised to explode. That is why the state, a repressive machine, often targets its nervous eyes on this aspect of the performance space. For even if it does not explode, might it not, by its sheer energy, through its laser beams of power, ignite other fields? For the magic sphere is not suspended in total isolation. There are other social centers and fields of human actions: farms, factories, residences, schools. Life goes on there—births, marriages, deaths, and their representations in celebratory festivals of welcome or in dirges of farewell.

Which brings us to another way, the second way, of looking at performance space. The performance space is also constituted by the totality of its external relations to these other centers and fields. Where are they all located relative to each other? Who accesses these centers and how frequently? It matters, in other words, whether, say, the artist's space is located in a working-class district, in a bourgeois residential neighborhood, in the ghettos, or in the glossy sections of our cities. The real politics of the performance space may well lie in the field of its external relations; in its actual or potential conflictual engagement with all the other shrines of power, and in particular, with the forces that hold the keys to those shrines. The shrines could be the synagogue, the church, the mosque, the temple, parliament, law courts, television and radio stations, the electronic and print media, the classroom—playing fields of all sorts and guises. In other words, it is often not so much a question of what happens or could happen on the stage at any one time but rather the control of continuous access and contact.

These questions of access and contact become very pertinent in a colonial and postcolonial state where the dominant social stratum is often unsure of its hegemonic control and particularly where the population is divided not only along the traditional lines of the urban and the rural but also on racial and ethnic fissures. And within those run class divisions. The gap between the poor and the rich is so glaring, so immediate, and so visible that the state may not want performance spaces to exist because they keep rubbing at this frictional area. In such a situation, the question of whether the space is inside a building or not may acquire symbolic value and become the site of intense power struggles.

The state has its areas of performance; so has the artist. While the state performs power, the power of the artist is solely in the performance.

And thirdly, the performance space, in its entirety of internal and external factors, may be seen in relationship to time; in terms, that is, of what has gone before—history—and what could follow—the future. What memories does the space carry, and what longings might it generate?

It is clear from this that the performance space is never empty. Bare, yes, open, yes, but never empty. It is always the site of physical, social, and psychic forces in society. It is the instinctive awareness of this that prompts the Athenian in Plato's *Laws* to want never to permit the serious performing artist to harangue women, children, common people about "our institutions." And hence the battles over performance space.

Drawing concretely on my own experiences with theatre in Kenya and on specific productions, I want to look at the performance space of the artist. Then I shall briefly look at the state's own areas of performance, and finally at

their interactions and consequences on the body and mind of the artist and the population as a whole. In the process we shall see how these spaces are tied to time, that is, history, and that therefore they are sites of physical, social, and psychic forces in a postcolonial society. We shall see that the politics of the performance space is a complex interplay of the entire field of internal and external relations of these forces in the context of time and history.

III

First, the space of the artist. That this space, however bare it looks, is not empty came home to me when in 1976 I became involved in the production of the play *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi*, whose national and world premier was in Nairobi, Kenya, on 20 October 1976. The playscript was a joint effort by Mĩcere Mũgo and myself. We were then colleagues in the Department of Literature at the University of Nairobi. Although she and I had for a long time discussed the possibility of collaborating on a play, it is ironic that what actually triggered intensified efforts on our part was a response to a call by the state. The venue for the Second World Black and African Festival of Arts and Culture originally scheduled for Zaire had been changed to Lagos, Nigeria, for February 1977. Kenya would be presented in all the events, from displays of material culture to performing arts, including theatre.

With the Kenyan presence at Lagos in sight, the Ministry of Social Services, under which culture and cultural institutions were administered, had set up a national committee to oversee all the preparations. This in turn set up subcommittees for the various events. The Drama Subcommittee was given the task of coming up with two plays. I was initially the chairman of this subcommittee, but later, when the play on which I had collaborated with Mĩcere Mũgo was submitted for consideration, I gave up the chair, and Seth Adagala took up the position. Seth Adagala then worked with the Ministry, having resigned a few years before as the first and at that time the only African director of the Kenya National Theatre. The Drama Subcommittee eventually selected two plays: *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o and Mĩcere Mũgo; and *Betrayal in the City* by Francis Imbuga. The two plays were to be run under the name Kenya FESTAC 77 Drama Group. Tirus Gathwe was to direct *Betrayal in the City*, and Seth Adagala, *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi*. But Seth Adagala, as the Chairman of the Ministry subcommittee, was to be in charge overall.

In June 1976, FESTAC 77 Drama Group came up with a brilliant but really commonsense proposal: since the two plays were supposedly going to represent Kenya in Lagos, it was important that they be performed first for audiences in Kenya, as a matter not of privilege but of right and necessity. There was an added reason: Kenya was going to host a UNESCO general conference; there would be many delegates from all over the world, and it would do Kenya's image a world of good were the delegates to see effective African theatre. The question now was simply to determine the best "symbolic" time and venue.

The month of October was finally selected for two reasons: the UNESCO meeting was to be held that month; but October was also the month in which Kenyans celebrated the heroes of anticolonial struggles. We were also unanimous on the question of the venue: the Kenya National Theatre. After all, it was called National, and it was under the Ministry of Social Services; and surely, apart from anything else, it would be the focal point of interest for the UNESCO delegates. Guardians of international education and culture, they would surely be interested in what the Kenya National Theatre would offer during their stay in the country. Thinking that everybody would applaud this,

the leadership of FESTAC 77 Drama Group presented the proposals to the management of the National Theatre. We were sure that there would be no problems: logic and good sense pointed to the selected time and place.

The first wake-up call took us all by surprise. The management, which was almost entirely composed of Europeans and whose members were linked to the major European amateur and semiprofessional groups, told us quite literally that there was no room at the inn! But this was in 1976, 13 years after formal independence under the presidency of Jomo Kenyatta! We drew their attention to the symbolism of the event: the dignity of Kenya before the world; the fact that Kenyans needed to see the play before it went to Lagos; and surely, apart from anything else, Kenyans needed to remind themselves that their independence was won through sweat and blood and the deaths of many! No room at the inn. The management was already committed to Bossman's *Jeune Ballet de France* and the City Players' *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*. At this crucial point in time and in a national venue, Kenya would be seen through the eyes of a French ballet and a Roman forum.

In the course of the struggle over dates and venues there now arose basic questions of principle. Shouldn't the Kenya National Theatre and the Kenya Cultural Centre be catering primarily to national interests? In planning for cultural activities for the year, did the management not take into account the Kenyan image in and outside the country? What shows should be performed on national holidays? And for the eyes of the world at the forthcoming UNESCO Conference? So many questions, so few answers—except that, for us, there was simply no room at the inn!

The management argued that the dates had been booked months before and that African plays never attracted theatre-lovers anyway. Statistics were even quoted as evidence. They had never stopped to ask why—assuming their allegations were true—there had always been a low turnout of Africans at the National Theatre. Were not the reasons very obvious, given what they proposed to offer as Kenyan culture before the eyes of the world in October? Could it not be that over the years the National Theatre had created for itself the image of a service station for Western shows such as *Godspell, The Boyfriend, The King and I,* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*? Or, more truthfully, a service center for the kind of theatre described as deadly in Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*?

Actually, behind the conflicting positions and arguments there were deeper questions of the performance of history. The story of the space defined as "the national theatre" was intertwined with that of the subject matter of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* and the story of the entire country. Three stories became locked together in the unfolding drama of times and venues!

The National Theatre complex was actually constructed by the colonial state. According to Richard Frost, former head of the Empire Information Services and the British Council's first representative in East Africa, the Theatre had been put up under direct instructions from the colonial office to meet the urgent needs for fostering good race relations in the colony through cultural practices. The National Theatre and the Cultural Centre complex were to be a place where "people of culture and position" could meet. In the book *Race Against Time*, Frost elaborates on this:

> At that time no Africans were able to live anywhere near the site which was selected, but the site was selected because it was hoped that in due time the residential apartheid would be brought to an end and Muthaiga, Westlands, the Hill and other areas, which were then open only for Europeans, would become districts where leading people of all races would live. As it was not to be a "working-class" theatre, it was built in the middle of the "well-to-do" Nairobi. (1975:73)

The National Theatre space was also going to be the host site of the Kenya Schools Drama Festival. The British Council, which had hatched the scheme in 1951, had hoped to "win the goodwill of Europeans and to help them keep at a high standard the cultural heritage of Britain" (Frost 1975:196). Theatre was the perfect instrument:

> Drama was a cultural activity enjoyed by both actors and audiences and it was also an activity in which Africans and Asians engaged. It was hoped that through the theatre the goodwill of the European community could be gained, and, later on, members of the different races could be brought together by participation in a common pursuit which they all enjoyed. (1975:196)

So, right from the start, the place had been conceived of as an empty space in which a predominantly British theatre was going to help in the construction of a new chapter of good race relations in the country.

The struggle may take the form of the state's intervention in the content of the artist's work—what goes by the name of censorship—but the main arena of struggle is the performance space: its definition, delimitation, and regulation.

But the site was not a space empty of history in which, now, a narrative of new race relations could be written through the mediating eyes of the colonial office in alliance with the colonized people "of goodwill." Next to the National Theatre site was, and still is, the Norfolk Hotel, built by Lord Delamere, one of the early British settlers, at the turn of the century. It was in fact known more popularly among the settlers as the House of Lords because that was where the colonial white nobility, or pretenders to nobility, used to meet for drinks and gossip and politics. The Norfolk Hotel overlooks the site where in 1922 African workers were massacred by the British police. The workers were marching to the Central Police Station to demand the release of their leader, Harry Thuku, who had been arrested, and who was later imprisoned for eight years because of his involvement in the nascent workers' movement. Their march was interrupted by gunfire from the police. The police were joined in the massacre by the white Lords on the terraces of the Norfolk Hotel. The figures of the dead are in dispute. The British admit to 22 only; but there were at least 150 dead. The bodies of the dead and the wounded lay sprawled on the ground of the site which years later was to house the National Theatre complex and the University of Nairobi. Harry Thuku became a nationalist hero, the subject of many songs and dances. But opposed to Harry Thuku and his workers' politics were the colonial-appointed chiefs who had founded the first ever loyalist movement in the country. The colonial state and the loyalist chiefs were on the same side in blaming the massacre on the victims.

The massacre had also attracted international protest. Marcus Garvey, on behalf of the Universal Negro Improvement Association, dispatched a telegram of protest to then British Prime Minister Lloyd George, in which, inter alia, he said:

> You have shot down a defenseless people in their own native land exercising their rights as men. Such a policy will aggravate the many historic injustices heaped upon a race that will one day be placed in a position to

> truly defend itself, not with mere sticks, clubs and stones, but with modern implements of science. (in Ngũgĩ 1987:40)

Garvey's prophecy came true in 1952 when a 22-year-old former primary school teacher and accountant escaped the tight security net and slipped into the mountains to become literally the most formidable leader of the Mau Mau Armed Guerrilla forces. His name was Dedan Kĩmathi.

Under Dedan Kĩmathi's leadership, the Mau Mau guerrillas put up one of the most heroic struggles against imperialism in the 20th century. It is often forgotten that while liberation movements in places such as Guinea Bissau, Mozambique, Angola, and Algeria had free neighboring territories that served as rear bases, Mau Mau guerrillas were completely surrounded by the enemy administration and had no fall-back position in a friendly neighboring state. They had to depend almost entirely on whatever arms they could steal from the enemy forces and on what they could make in the nascent underground arms factories in the country's cities and forests. Before his capture in 1956 and execution in 1957, even the British government and the colonial state had to admit that, despite thousands of soldiers brought from the British bases all over the world, and despite bombings on a scale reminiscent of the Second World War, there were virtually two governing authorities in Kenya: the colonial, led by the Governor, and Mau Mau, led by Dedan Kĩmathi.

The period saw the most incredible upsurge of Kenyan culture. There were several newspapers in Kenyan languages. Songs and dances celebrating the African past, condemning colonial practices, and calling for freedom erupted. In the educational field, people developed their own schools under the Kikuyu Independence Schools Movement and Kikuyu Karĩng'a Schools Association. This educational movement culminated in the building by the people themselves of the first ever institute of higher learning in the country, Gĩthũngũri African Teachers College, led by Mbiyũ wa Koinange, a Columbia University graduate. The symbolic importance of this can be seen in the fact that it was not until 1960, three years before Independence, that the second institute of higher learning, the University College of Nairobi, was built, ironically, on a site next to both the Norfolk Hotel and the National Theatre. So by 1952 there were performances of hope everywhere.

The colonial state retaliated. In October 1952, a state of emergency was declared. African-run schools were closed down because they were seen as performance sites for the nationalist forces. Gĩthũngũri Teachers College was closed as an educational institution and was turned into a prison where captured Mau Mau guerrillas and sympathizers were hanged. All cultural performances were stopped. And on 20 October 1952, Kenyatta and hundreds of leaders of KAU (Kenya African Union) and Mau Mau were arrested. Kenyatta and seven others were later tried in what became one of the most celebrated trials in colonial history, now immortalized in the book by Montague Slater, *The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta* (1955). The defendants were found guilty of managing Mau Mau and were imprisoned for eight years of hard labor. The colonial state did not bother with the trials of hundreds of others; they were summarily sent to concentration camps all over the country.

The play *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* tries to capture the heroism and determination of the people in that most glorious chapter of their history, a moment that not only broke the back of the British Empire and its entire colonial policy, but also, for Kenyans, a moment that was the culmination of all the previous struggles waged by the other resistance heroes of our history, such as Waiyaki, Me Katilili, and Koitalel. Kĩmathi saw himself as part of the tradition of that struggle but also in relation to the Tyler rebellion in Britain, an event he referred to in a letter addressed to the British from his hideout in

the mountains. The play tries to capture the fears and the hopes, the promises and the betrayals, with the hint that history could repeat itself.

It is now evident that both the venue and the time—the particular days and the entire month of October—carried different memories. For the management, 1952 was the year that the National Theatre was constructed and opened. And between 1952—the year that saw the declaration of a state of emergency, the banning of independent African performances, the outbreak of the Mau Mau armed struggle—and 1963, the year of formal independence, the National Theatre space had remained a site for basically British theatre, a site into which Africans could be admitted as they matured into people of culture and position.

It was these men and women of culture and position who, after Independence, were indeed able to integrate into those special areas that Frost talks about: Muthaiga, Westlands, and the Hill. Independence removed racial apartheid but retained economic barriers. Some of these African Kenyans, defined by the British as men of "culture and position," were also to assume very important seats in the new postcolonial government. One of these was the son of one of the early colonial chiefs who were part of the loyalist movement opposed to the nationalist politics of Harry Thuku. He became an Attorney General and, as a patron of one of the European performing groups and with his social linkage to most of the members of the management of the Kenya National Theatre and Cultural Centre, he was to play a crucial role in ensuring the uninterrupted control of the space by men and women who could maintain standards already set by the colonial state. And for him, although he himself was a black African, the only people who could ensure that continuity were the British white. In other words, colonial practices were to be the standard of measure for the performative culture at the space. Not surprisingly, the management of the Centre could sincerely feel it was doing its duty to Kenya by offering a display of a French ballet during the historic month of October and during a UNESCO Conference hosted by Kenya. For them, the symbols of French ballet and a Roman forum stood for the authentic tradition of an Anglican Kenya.

The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi stood for a different tradition. It celebrated the Mau Mau heroism and its centrality in bringing about independence for Kenya. But even more important, it was affiliated with the culture and aesthetic of resistance developed by the Mau Mau activists as they fought in the mountains; as they resisted in prison and concentration camps and villages; and as they called out for a new Kenya and a new Africa. A good number of the Mau Mau patriotic dances and songs, now available in a collection edited by Maina wa Kĩnyattĩ under the title *Thunder from the Mountains* ([1980] 1990), were incorporated both in the text and performance of the play.

So the conflict over the performance space was also a struggle over which cultural symbols and activities would represent the new Kenya. The new Kenya had emerged from an anticolonial struggle: Could a colonial culture and heritage effectively form the basis of its nationhood and identity? Even small acts could carry conflicting visions of the new Kenya. At a time when the FESTAC 77 Drama Group was trying to carry out a performance that reflected national history and to devise emblems that symbolized this, the management of the Kenyan National Theatre was selling Christmas cards of the National Theatre building as it was in 1952. It was then, of course, flying the Union Jack, the British flag, and this was quite prominent on the cards.

IV

The Ministry, probably embarrassed by press notices that a Kenyan play had been handcuffed on Kenyatta Day, intervened; the FESTAC 77 Drama Group was given eight days between 20 and 30 October to use the space. So the two

plays, *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* and *Betrayal in the City*, were crammed into four nights each, between Bossman's *Jeune Ballet de France* (10 to 18 October) and the City Players' *A Funny Thing Happened On the Way to the Forum* (1 to 21 November). That in effect meant that the two European shows would take up a total of 31 days to our eight.

However, despite being squeezed into only eight nights, the success of the two productions was astounding, especially in terms of the reception by African audiences. Every single night of the eight days was sold out. The opening night of *The Trial* was particularly memorable because Kĩmathi's wife and her children were prominent guests. The family stayed with the cast almost the night long, telling stories of the war and singing many of the songs over and over again. As one newspaper put it: "Never before has the story of Kenya's freedom struggle been told with such force and conviction" (*Target* 1977). Nor, if I might add, had any previous production at the National Theatre been received with so much enthusiasm by a Kenyan audience. For those eight nights, the space had been truly nationalized by the feet of so many from all walks of life who came on foot, in private cars, and in hired vehicles to sing and dance with the actors.

The performance space is never empty. Bare, yes, open, yes, but never empty. It is always the site of physical, social, and psychic forces in society.

But the dramatic highlight still belonged to the opening night. As the actors performed their last song and dance through the middle aisle of the auditorium, they were joined by the audience. They all went outside the theatre building, still dancing. What had been confined to the stage had spilled out into the open air, and there was no longer any distinction between actors and audience. It had become a procession, and they weaved their way towards the historic Norfolk Hotel, towards the terraces where in 1922 the settlers had sat and helped the police in their massacre. Even in 1976 it was still largely patronized by whites, mostly tourists. As the procession was about to cross the road, the group was met by a contingent of police who now told them, politely but firmly, to turn back. There was then no antagonistic physical confrontation. The actors danced back to the National Theatre, formed a circle outside, and continued with their dances and songs that talked about all the heroes of Kenyan resistance. The scene outside the theatre building recurred each of the four nights allocated to *The Trial*. But the attempt to dance onto the premises of the Norfolk Hotel was not repeated. Nevertheless, it was as if the cast and the audience were trying to create an Open Space all around the Kenya National Theatre building, a space that would allow them to communicate better with the spirits of those who had died in 1922. A name that kept on cropping up in the singing was Mary Mũthoni Nyanjirũ, the woman who led the workers' procession and was the first to fall under the hail of colonial bullets.

After the eight days allocated to the two plays, we all vacated the space, peacefully. The Europeans came with their productions. One day Seth Adagala and I were summoned to the Nairobi Headquarters of the Criminal Investigation Department for a few questions about the performances at the Theatre. Actually one question! Why were we interfering with European performances at the National Theatre?

V

For some of us, it was clear from that experience that if Kenyan theatre were ever to thrive, it would have to find and define its own space, in terms of both physical location and language. *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* had been done in English on disputed grounds. The real national theatre surely lay where the majority of the people resided: in the villages of the countryside and in the poor urban areas. It would have to be the site of a combination of what Brook describes as Holy Theatre, Rough Theatre, and Immediate Theatre. It would have to be a theatre that scraped the bottom of the historical space of the people's experience in order to speak to their immediate presence as they faced their tomorrow. To achieve any of that, it was important, we felt, to have a performance space directly under the control of the people. Those are some of the concerns, among others, that led to the foundation of Kamĩrĩĩthũ Community Education and Cultural Centre.

I have told bits and pieces of the Kamĩrĩĩthũ story in three of my books: *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary*; *Decolonizing the Mind*; and *Barrel of a Pen*, so I shall not go into too many details here. The project, which was started in 1976 as a literacy and cultural program with theatre at the center, became a truly community affair involving peasants, factory workers, and plantation workers who were then residents in the village of the same name. In 1977, together with the peasant and worker community of this village called Kamĩrĩĩthũ—about 30 kilometers from the capital city, Nairobi—we developed a play, *Ngaahika Ndeenda* (I Will Marry When I Want), in which people were literally singing about their own history. Here were peasants and workers who only the year before had been illiterate, who were used to singing songs of praise about the leadership and what it had done for the people, and who could now not only read and write but were actually singing with pride about their own abilities, about what they had done in the past, and now about their hopes of what they could do tomorrow! What's more, they had built an open-air theatre in the village center by their own efforts—and with no handouts from the state! They had reclaimed their historical space.

They tried to do the same when in 1982 they attempted another play, *Mother Sing for Me*. Again it was pride in their own history and faith in their own abilities and hence their hope for the future that was important. Professor Ingrid Bjorkman, who did research on Kamĩrĩĩthũ in 1982, has written a book that really testifies to this aspect. She came to Kenya in 1982 in the aftermath of the government repression, and she interviewed the actors as well as members of the audience who had come to see the play in the public rehearsals before the ban. She closes her main text with the words of one of those who had attended the show:

> The remarkable thing is that in our kind of system it is believed that we have people who have to think for us. As workers and peasants, people who actually toil, we are not supposed to associate things in isolation and you always know that you are being led into anything. Now here Ngũgĩ showed in *Mother Sing for Me* that peasants can think and they can communicate those thoughts—the understanding of their environment—to other people. They can understand what makes them that which they are. It beats somebody, who has always known that he is a thinker, to think that a peasant could act and could also form songs that could express himself. [...] So this feeling that the peasants can understand a situation and actually communicate what they are thinking is what became the biggest threat. Because to be led you have to be "sheep." And when you show that you are not "sheep" the leader becomes disturbed. (1989:97)

The attempt to locate theatre among the people would call for new questions and answers about the content, form, and language of African theatre. But in November 1976 I did not realize that the attempt to locate culture where it belonged would raise even more problems and questions, not only about the performance space of the artist but that of the state as well.

VI

All the world is a stage, said Shakespeare in *As You Like It*, with many players having their exits and entrances. The nation-state sees the entire territory as its performance area; it organizes the space as a huge enclosure, with definite places of entrance and exit. These exits and entrances are manned by companies of workers they call immigration officials. The borders are manned by armed guards to keep away invaders. But they are also there to confine the population within a certain territory. The nation-state performs its own being relentlessly, through its daily exercise of power over the exits and entrances, by means of passports, visas, and flags.

Within that territorial enclosure, it creates other enclosures, the most prominent being prison, with its entrances and exits guarded by armed might. How did prison, a much narrower stage, come to be such an important site for the state's performance of punishment? The state would prefer to act out its power, watched by the entire territorial audience. In the television age this is possible, though there are restraints. Historically, punishments were not always enacted in a hidden enclosure. In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault has described, in minute detail, scenes of punishment in 18th-century Europe in terms of spectacle, what he calls the theatrical representation of pain by the state. "There were even some cases of an almost theatrical reproduction of the crime in the execution of the guilty man—with the same instruments, the same gestures" (1979:45). These used to happen in the open. "In the ceremonies," writes Foucault, "the main character was the people, whose real and immediate presence was required for the performance" (58):

> An execution that was known to be taking place, but which did so in secret, would scarcely have had any meaning. The aim was to make an example, not only by making people aware that the slightest offence was likely to be punished, but by arousing feelings of terror by the spectacle of power letting its anger fall upon the guilty person. (1979:58–59)

In his *TDR* article "Theatre for an Angry God," Mark Fearnow has described a similar phenomenon in 18th-century America. He discusses the public burnings and hangings in colonial New York in 1741 in terms of performance, what he describes as "the most revolting ends to which theatrical techniques can be applied: public execution as popular entertainment, the display of rotting and exploding corpses as triumphant spectacle" (1996:16). But this spectacle did not always produce the desired ends, particularly on the audience. Foucault writes that the condemned, by how he reacted to the pain, could sometimes win the sympathy and even the admiration of those watching, and that there was always the danger of the crowd intervening. The people, drawn to a spectacle meant to terrorize them, could express their rejection of the punitive power and sometimes revolt.

> Preventing an execution that was regarded as unjust, snatching a condemned man from the hands of the executioner, obtaining his pardon by force, possibly pursuing and assaulting the executioners, in any case abusing the judges and causing an uproar against the sentence—all this

> formed part of popular practices that invested, traversed and often overturned the ritual of public execution. (Foucault 1979:59–60)

And even after his death, the so-called criminal could turn into a saint and come back to haunt the state. The condemned found himself transformed into a hero by the sheer weight of the drama and publicity surrounding his case: "Against the law, against the rich, the powerful, the magistrates, the constabulary, or the watch, against taxes and their collectors, he appeared to have waged a struggle with which one all too easily identified" (Foucault 1979:67).

There were pre-18th-century precedents: the most famous case in biblical antiquity is that of Jesus Christ, whose public execution was later to haunt the Roman state and empire. So, in time, this open-air theatrical representation of pain was withdrawn from the open space into an enclosure. But, wryly comments Foucault:

> Whatever the part played by feelings of humanity for the condemned in the abandonment of the liturgy of the public executions, there was, in any case, on the part of the state power, a political fear of the effects of these ambiguous rituals. (1979:65)

Fearnow describes the same fear—the threat to public order in the fairs that developed spontaneously around such executions—as being behind the banning of gibbeting in England in 1845. The truth of these observations is attested to in real historical cases, as described by Foucault, but also in literature. The Dickensian condemned in *Great Expectations* could always win sympathy, even if it was that of a small boy—the Pips for the Magwitches of the world. In Kenya, the colonial state carried out public executions and displayed bodies of the condemned Mau Mau, but this always aroused more anger against the state, as I have dramatized in my novel *A Grain of Wheat* (1967). And when in 1984 the postcolonial state ordered processions in which my effigy was burned and the ashes were thrown into rivers, lakes, and into the ocean, the spectacle only aroused more sympathy for me and the cause I was espousing: the release of all political prisoners in Kenya. Although the practice of public punishment still continues in some countries, and certainly in other more indirect ways throughout the world, removing the spectacle of punishment from the larger territorial space into an enclosure is a logical development. No state wants its designated "criminals" transformed into heroes and saints, with the possibility of their graves becoming some kind of revolutionary shrine.

The nation-state performs its own being relentlessly, through its daily exercise of power over the exits and entrances, by means of passports, visas, and flags.

But though the punishment was moved from the open into an enclosure, the element of performance remained, particularly for political and intellectual prisoners—artists, mostly. The prison yard is like a stage, where everything, including movement, is directed and choreographed by the state. The mise-en-scène, the play of light and shadows, the timing and regulation of actions—even those of eating and sleeping and defecating—are directed by the armed stagehands they call prison warders. It is literally a proscenium stage with the fourth wall added and securely locked so that there is no question of

a privileged spectator peeping through it and seeing the mise-en-scène. Nevertheless, both the state and the condemned artist are aware that there is an interested audience outside the walls of the enclosure. The state tries to interpret, for the audience outside, what is happening inside the closed walls: the prisoner has confessed; the prisoner is healthy; or whatever fabrications it wants to feed the world about the artist-prisoner.

The prisoner tries to counter the government propaganda by whatever means are at his disposal. Escape is impossible, suicidal even. So he resorts to pen and paper when he can find them. Hence the struggle for the literary means of production. Prison narratives by artist-prisoners are essentially a documentation of the battle of texts and of the continuous contestation of the state's performance space. This contestation, while aimed at the groups of interested watchers outside the gates—Amnesty International, International PEN, Release Writers Committees, and other human rights groups—is ultimately aimed at the real audience: the people waiting in the territorial space. The state tries to direct the drama of the artist-prisoner's self-condemnation—a confession of crimes of thought, his own guilt, so to speak—and this has parallels with the gallows speeches of those theatrical spectacles of medieval and feudal Europe:

> The rite of execution was so arranged that the condemned man would himself proclaim his guilt by the *amende honorable* that he spoke, by the placard he displayed and also by the statements that he was no doubt forced to make. Furthermore, at the moment of execution, it seems that he was given another opportunity to speak, not to proclaim his innocence but to acknowledge his crime and the justice of his conviction. (Foucault 1979:65)

The artist-prisoner, with every fiber of his being, resists displaying "the placard of self-condemnation," and even if he is forced through torture to display it, he will try to dispatch to the world, through some of the more sympathetic stagehands, another placard denying the content of the first. This contestation of the state's prison performance space is also a means of resistance, a means of staying alive in this torture chamber of the spirit. It is, in other words, one of the ways of denying the state a triumphant epilogue to its performance.

VII

There is no performance without a goal. The prison is the enclosure in which the state organizes the use of space and time in such a way as to achieve what Foucault calls docile bodies and hence, docile minds. The struggle to subjugate the mind of the artist-prisoner is paramount. That's why once again books and reading materials become so vital an object of struggle. Prison narratives are full of accounts about the books that one is not allowed to read and the ones that the artist-prisoner is permitted to read. The authorized and banned list, a kind of prison index of the prison inquisition, can be a window into the mind of the state. In his book, *Kenya: A Prison Notebook* (1986), historian Maina wa Kĩnyattĩ records many episodes in which he is forbidden to read any of my works. "Ngũgĩ's novels are political, they are dangerous," he is told over and over again during his six and half years in various maximum security prisons. But he has to find ways to read these same books, or similar ones. Thus Maina wa Kĩnyattĩ is amused by the fact that he can read Richard Wright and Maxim Gorky without problems. A political prisoner, in fact, is acting out an aesthetic of resistance through bodily or mental gestures. He is fighting against the docility of the mind intended by the state. Even

within the prison walls he will try to create a physical, social, and mental space for himself. He will try to use his allotted time and space and his limited social interactions in a manner that gives him maximum psychic space.

We have a humorous illustration of this in Hama Tuma's *The Case of the Socialist Witchdoctor* (1993). In the story "The Case of the Prison-Monger," Hama Tuma tells of an Ethiopian intellectual who describes himself as a "prisonmaniac." He claims that he really loves prison. Every time he comes out of prison, he commits a crime, however petty, so that he can be sent back to jail. The prosecuting team asks him: Doesn't it bother you to spend ten years of the prime of your life behind prison walls? No, he replies. He argues that people are really in prison only when they believe it to be so. A house can be a prison. Even a palace can be a gilded prison for a king. On the other hand, the monk who shuts himself up in total isolation in a cave is not in prison. "In prison, I met very many really free people," he asserts, to the utter astonishment of the judge/prosecutor who cannot understand this logic. Then follows this exchange:

> What sentence do you now expect for your crime?
> I should be sent to prison for five years as the article 689 of the Penal code states.
> What if you are set free?
> That will be a crime, the accused says really shocked at the possibility of freedom.
> But if you are set free, would you commit a crime again?
> I couldn't avoid it. For the public good and mine.
> If you commit three more crimes, you will be killed.
> Then death will be a relief indeed. Not punishment but real salvation. (1993:120–21)

And now comes the judgment:

> You, the accused, you are a no-good, fast talking, lazy, strange, crazy person. You are a parasite. You are also dangerous. Whoever finds joy in prison, whoever feels free in our jails goes against the order of things, goes against the expected. A cow can't give birth to a puppy. Prison is a punishment, not a source of calm and freedom. If such feelings as yours spread, our security will be in chaos. I agree with the prosecutor. You are hereby sentenced to immediate freedom. (1993:121)

The accused almost faints from the shock of his sentence. When he recovers from the shock, he is shouting and screaming at the judge: "You can't do this! You must send me back to prison!"

The point is now made. For him, the actual prison, the enclosure, is less evil than the wider territorial space under the military regime. The entire country is one vast prison where people's movements are tightly controlled, where they can be dislocated from familiar spaces into those easily patrolled. In any case, dislocation and dispersal can be one way of removing any basis for a collective performance of identity and resistance. The method had been tried during plantation slavery in America and the Caribbean islands.

VIII

In *Song of Ocol* by Okot p'Bitek (1988), the lead character, a member of the postcolonial ruling elite, actually wants to ban all performances so that they may not reflect his blackness. He wails: "Mother, mother, why was I born

black?" But the easiest way is to obliterate the rural space altogether, because this is the site of those performances that most remind him of his African being. His vision for postcolonial Africa is described in terms of a huge city that swallows the rural completely:

> I see the great gate
> Of the city flung open
> I see men and women walking in (1988:149)

The rural person has only two alternatives:

> Either you come in
> Through the city gate
> Or take the rope
> And hang yourself (149)

Do we hear in this echoes of English economic history with its enclosures in the 18th century? The goal is to take away the land, which is the basis of the peasantry, and turn the tillers into wage slaves in the urban enclosures called factories and ghettos. It is another way of restricting the performance space of the tiller.

Prison, then, is a metaphor for the postcolonial space; for even in a country where there are no military regimes, the vast majority of people can be described as being condemned to conditions of perpetual physical, social, and psychic confinement. The state performs its rituals of power not only by being able to control exits and entrances into the territorial space—its entire performance space—but also by being able to move people between the various enclosures within the national territorial space. But the aesthetic of resistance that survives in both the smaller prison and the territorial one may force the state to try other measures. So sometimes it acts out those rituals of absolute control over the entire territorial space by forcing people, citizens, out of the territorial space of the nation-state and into an existence as anchorless wanderers in the global space. There is the special case of the penal colony, the most striking being Australia, where a whole people, deemed undesirable, were removed from one territorial space to another, equally big or bigger. In Africa, there is the example of Angola: it was used as a penal settlement. In her historical note to her translation of Pepetela's novel, *Yaka* (1996), Marga Holness says that in addition to Portuguese colonial officials and troops, the white community in the 19th century included ex-convicts, political exiles—Republicans, anarchists—and some who had fled from the newly Republican Brazil. Forcing writers and artists into exile is a variant form of penal settlement at the level of the individual. The only difference is that, unlike a penal settlement, the global space where such writers may find themselves is not controlled by the same state. But the spiritual effects may be the same.

IX

A writer floating in space without anchorage in her country is like a condemned person. Nawal Sa'adawi feels as if she is in jail whenever she is away from her Egypt. For her, exile becomes like another prison. So exile is a way of moving the writer from a territorial confinement, where her acts of resistance might ignite other fields, into a global "exclosure." The hope is that her actions from this exclosure, whatever they are, will not directly affect those confined within the vast territorial enclosure. But here, as inside a prison, there are many contradictory consequences for both the state and the artist. The artist in exile

knows that he or she has been removed from the space that nourishes imagination. The artist will nevertheless try to break out of the exclosure and reach out to the territorial space. From exile, he or she will still try to challenge the state's absolute hold on the territorial space. And because of this, the state is also in a dilemma. To let an artist go into global space means the continued rivalry for the attention of a global audience. Besides, the word of the exiled may very well travel back to the territory and continue to haunt the state. Which is what happened in 1984. Dan Barron-Cohen, an Oxford graduate, and I directed a London production of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* at Africa Centre using techniques developed at Kamĩrĩĩthũ. The Kenyan state sought to have the performance, both at Africa Centre and at the Commonwealth Institute, stopped. They wanted the British government to do it for them; but this time there was no cooperative response. In Zimbabwe, Ngũgĩ wa Mĩriĩ has utilized and extended the Kamĩrĩĩthũ experience to create one of the most continuous community-theatre movements in Africa. The Kenyan state tried in vain to make the Zimbabwean state act against Ngũgĩ's activities.

That's why banning performances or confining artists in prison or killing them are the actions to which the state frequently resorts. But to avoid the contradictory repercussions of imprisonment, exile, and physical elimination, like the possible condemnation by the national or international audience, the state may find it much easier to deny the artist space altogether. It is the path that invites least resistance and condemnation. It is the method highly recommended by Plato: "And therefore when any of these pantomime gentlemen who are so clever that they can imitate anything makes a proposal to exhibit himself and his poetry, we shall send him away to another city" (1976:III, 23).

X

We can now make a tentative observation: that the more open the performance space, the more it seems to terrify those in possession of repressive power. This can be seen through a quick comparison of the actions of the colonial and the postcolonial states to performances in the open space.

The precolonial African performance area was often the open space in a courtyard or in an arena surrounded by wood and natural hedge. It could also be inside buildings, where stories were told in the evening around the fireside. But the open space was dominant, and even in the intimate circle around the fireside, it was the openness of the performance area that was marked. In this kind of space, the storyteller and the interactive listeners are in the same area. Visitors can come into the scene at any time, for the main door is not barred to would-be guests. Equally well, any of the listeners can go in and out. Any space can be turned into a performance area as long as there are people around. Thus the performance space is defined by the presence or absence of people.

Colonial conquests resulted in the creation of clear-cut boundaries that defined the dominated space with controlled points of exits and entrances, and in the formation of a colonial state to run the occupied territory. And right from the beginning, the colonial state was very wary of the open air. It was not sure of what was being done out there, in the open spaces, in the plains, in the forested valleys and mountains. It was even less sure of people dancing in the streets, in market squares, in churchyards and burial places. And what did those drumbeats in the dark of the night really mean? What did they portend?

Attempts to suppress or strongly limit all open-air performances within the territorial space followed. A few examples from Kenya: I have already mentioned the stoppage of the ituĩka ceremony. This was one of many such stoppages. After the 1922 Harry Thuku massacres, women devised a song-dance

formation called *Kanyegenyũri*, which needed no permanently defined ground in order to be performed. The song-poem-dance was banned by the colonial regime: it could not be sung or danced or recited anywhere on Kenyan soil. The colonial state treated another dance formation, *Mũthĩrĩgũ*, developed after the Second World War, in the same manner. And in 1952, when the colonial regime once again acted against the nationwide upsurge of anticolonial dances and songs, it banned all open-air performances in any part of the country. It did not matter what was being performed at a particular moment. Every performance, a simple gathering for prayers even, had to be authorized. Communications between one space and the next had to be authorized. The entire territory was one vast performance space, full of threatening motions of innumerable magic spheres. In the era of apartheid in South Africa, an elaborate pass system was developed to regulate the entire territorial space—it being the grounds for daily performance.

So exile is a way of moving the writer from a territorial confinement, where her acts of resistance might ignite other fields, into a global "exclosure."

The postcolonial state exhibits similar sensitivities. The collective expression of joy and even grief outside the watchful eyes of the state may, in some instances, constitute a crime. So the postcolonial state tries to enact limitations similar to those of the colonial state. In Kenya, under the Chief's Act, a gathering of more than five people, no matter where or no matter what the occasion, requires a police license. The performance spaces for prayers, funeral dirges, marriage ceremonies, naming tea parties, family gatherings, sports, are dependent on the issuance of a permit. Thus when the police break into any gathering and break up storytelling sessions in people's homes, they are absolutely within the law. Performances were to be contained in controllable enclosures: in licensed theatre buildings, in schools, especially—but they were not to take place in open spaces where the people resided.

In other words, says Guillermo Gómez-Peña in his article in *TDR*, "The Artist as Criminal," describing similar scenes of the suppression of street performances in Mexico in 1994:

> It is one thing to carry out iconoclastic actions in a theatre or museum before a public that is predisposed to tolerating radical behavior, and quite another to bring the work into the street and introduce it into the mined terrain of unpredictable social and political forces. (1996:112)

A comparison between the first performance of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* on 20 October 1976 within an enclosure of stone and concrete called the Kenya National Theatre and of *I Will Marry When I Want* at Kamĩrĩĩthũ village on 2 October 1977 at the Open Air Theatre, a construction without roof and stone walls, is instructive. The production of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi* was done by university students in English; that of *I Will Marry When I Want*, by a cast of peasants and workers in Gĩkũyũ language. Thus in 1976, despite the tensions and the publicity surrounding the productions of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi*, and despite the police questions, there was in fact no action taken by the state against the performance. But on 16 November 1977, the state banned further performances of *I Will Marry When I Want*. And in 1982

they barred the same Kamĩrĩĩthũ group from performing anywhere, even at the National Theatre.

But the state's reaction to the two spaces is even more instructive. In 1976 and 1982, the postcolonial state could bar people from the National Theatre, but the building was never destroyed. In 1982, after the same cast of village actors tried to perform another play, *Mother Sing for Me*, the state reacted by not only refusing to license the performances, but by sending armed policemen to raze the Kamĩrĩĩthũ Open Theatre to the ground. Performances, not only at the Centre but in the entire Limuru county, were banned. The state attached so much value to the destruction of the open-air space, that the whole performance of the ban on Kamĩrĩĩthũ Players on 12 March 1982 was televised for all the country to see. There was the provincial commissioner with all the regional bureaucrats under him, guarded by armed troops, summoning an entire village to a meeting at which the ceremony of denying space to Kamĩrĩĩthũ Players was to take place. The ceremony was preceded by prayers from leaders of the various established religious denominations, who had been dragged into the scene to bestow the occasion with divine sanctioning. But it was also noticed that most of the prayers took the form of asking God to endow the human heart with the spirit of tolerance. Again, in 1976 Seth Adagala and I got away with just police questioning. But in 1977 I was arrested and incarcerated in a maximum security prison for one year, released only after the death of the first head of state, Jomo Kenyatta; and in 1982 I found myself in exile from Kenya.

The collective expression of joy and even grief outside the watchful eyes of the state may, in some instances, constitute a crime.

The open space among the people is perceived by the state to be the most dangerous area because it is the most vital. Thus the Kenyan state's performance of its ritual of power over the territorial space took the form of removing me from the people, first by confining me in prison from 1977–1978, and then by forcing me out of the territorial space altogether in 1982. They could have done worse by removing me from the global space à la Ken Saro Wiwa, as has happened to thousands of other Kenyans.

XI

The performance space of the artist stands for openness; that of the state, for confinement. Art breaks down barriers between peoples; the state erects them. Art arose out of the human struggle to break free from confinement. These confinements could be natural. But they can also be economic, political, social, and spiritual. Art yearns for a maximum of physical, social, and spiritual space for human action. The state tries to demarcate, limit, and control.

That is why the question of the politics of the performance space is germane to any theorizing about the postcolonial condition. For the politics of the performance space is much more than a question of a physical site for a theatrical show. It touches on nearly all aspects of power and being in a colonial and postcolonial society. It is germane to issues of what will constitute the national and the mainstream. In a postcolonial state this takes the form of a struggle between those who defend the continuity of colonial traditions and

those who want to see reflections of a new nation and a new people in the performance space as a unified field of internal and external relations.

But ultimately, the politics of the performance space and its location is a class question. For human labor is the real artist in the world. All other forms of artistic expression imitate that of the human hand and mind. And the human hand and mind have the entire limitless space and time for their performance of the struggle for human freedom and self-realization. But the class society that has come into being has created all sorts of borders, enclosures, to confine that freedom. The enclosures could be the nation-state, religions, race, gender, ideology, languages—any social variation on those themes. Questions of the performance space are tied to those of democracy, to those of civil society, to those of which class controls the state.

One of the most effective ways of ensuring minority social control of labor and the products of labor is the exclusion of whole classes of people from effective participation in the national life. Whole classes of people can be put into psychic enclosure: slaves and serfs in feudal societies; the working people in most advanced capitalist countries today; and women in most societies. In such societies this is done through what Antonio Gramsci described as hegemonic rather than formal exclusionary laws (1967). In Africa, the exclusion of the majority and their enclosure in a narrowed psychic space is achieved through the dominance of European languages in addition to the more brutal methods of the police boots. But the language of cultural force can be as brutal to the communal psyche as the military force is to the physical body. Hence the struggle for performance space is integral to the strugggle for democratic space and social justice.

References

Bjorkman, Ingrid
1989 *'Mother Sing for Me': People's Theatre in Kenya.* London: Zed Press.

Brook, Peter
1968 *The Empty Space.* New York: Avon Books.

Fearnow, Mark
1996 "Theatre for an Angry God: Public Burnings and Hangings in Colonial New York, 1741." *TDR* 40, 2 (T150):15–36.

Foucault, Michel
1979 *Discipline and Punish.* New York: Routledge.

Frost, Richard
1975 *Race Against Time.* London: Rex Collings.

Gòmez-Peña, Guillermo
1996 "The Artist As Criminal." *TDR* 40, 1 (T149):112–18.

Gramsci, Antonio
1967 *The Modern Prince, and Other Writings.* New York: International Publishers.

Hama Tuma
1993 *The Case of the Socialist Witchdoctor.* London: Heinemann.

Kenyatta, Jomo
1962 [1938] *Facing Mount Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu.* New York: Vintage Books.

Maina wa Kĩnyattĩ
1990 [1980] *Thunder from the Mountains.* Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o
1987 *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary.* London: Heinemann.

Okot p'Bitek
1988 *Song of Ocol*. Nairobi: Heinemann.

Pepetela
1996 *Yaka*. Translated by Marga Holness. Oxford: Heinemann.

Plato
1976 *Philosophies of Beauty*. Edited by Albert Hofstadter and Richard Kuhns. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Slater, Montague
1955 *The Trial of Jomo Kenyatta*. London: Secker and Warburg.

Target, The
1977 Review of *The Trial of Dedan Kĩmathi*. *The Target* (Nairobi), October.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o *is Professor of Comparative Literature and Performance Studies, and Erich Maria Remarque Professor of Languages at New York University. One of* TDR*'s Contributing Editors, Ngũgĩ is the author of novels, literary essays, and plays, including* Decolonizing the Mind *(Heinemann, 1984),* Matigari ma Nijuungi *(1986), and* Moving the Centre: The Struggle for Cultural Freedoms *(1993). With his wife Njeeri wa Ngũgĩ, he publishes the Gikũyũ language journal* Mũtiiri.